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Editorial

Managing Editor Andy Lien 612-436-4671

Assistant Managing Editor Shane Lueck 612-436-4692

Editorial Assistant Linda Raines 612-436-4694

Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner

Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer

Arts Editor-At-Large John Mark

Contributors Patrick Boland, Kathleen Bradbury, Thomas Ehnert, Nell Gelhaus, Ellen Krug, Steve Lenius, Shane Lueck, John Mark, Jennifer Parelo, Randy Stern, Joy Summers, John Townsend, Bradley Traynor, Carla Waldemar

Advertising

Sales & Advertising Director Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690

Senior Account Executive Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

Account Executives Robert Felton 612-436-4697, Richard Kranz 612-436-4675, Jory Miller 612-436-4695

Advertising Associate George Holdgrafer

Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator

Linda Raines 612-436-4694

Sales Lead Specialist Michelle Ulmer 612-436-4693

Classifieds Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

National Sales Representative Rivendell Media
212-242-6863

Creative

Creative Director Hubert Bonnet 612-436-4678

Graphic Designer Mike Hnida 612-436-4679

Photographer Sophia Hantzes

Lavender Studios Hubert Bonnet, Mike Hnida

Administration

Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.

President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665

Vice President & CC Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666

Chief Financial Officer Mary Lauer 612-436-4664

Distribution Manager/Administrative Assistant Molly Gosh
612-436-4660

Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford

Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee (1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford (1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam Houghtaling (1984-2012), Walker Pearce (1946-2013), Tim Campbell (1939-2015)

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612-436-4660 **Office**

612-436-4685 **Fax**

612-436-4660 **Subscriptions/Distribution**

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OUR LAVENDER

FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

Thanks

This issue comes out the day before Thanksgiving, timed to hit before the arguably biggest shopping days of the year. It's a time when we're programmed to give thanks. Each year, we see on TV or in our dining rooms people going around a table and telling each other about the things they're particularly grateful for this year. So, in this issue that tends to be a little bit of fluff full of gift ideas and frivolous notions, I'd like to highlight why I'm thankful for it.

The Holiday Gift Guide is something that is developed both for people in this community and by people in this community. It is not necessarily a rainbow on every page, but at its core is the notion that not only does this community have buying power, but it also demands freedom of expression in that buying power. Whether it's something as neutral as a hoodie or as overt as a "Queer AF" mug or somewhere in-between with a neon unicorn, the choices are careful and the choices matter. I'm pleased that contributors came forward with health and wellness ideas, too, because being able to find peace in our minds and bodies is crucial to our well-being, particularly as a community that is still so marginalized. This issue is a reminder of what we have and can give, and I am grateful for it.

I am grateful for the tribute Steve Lenius wrote about his mother. Steve is one of our two writers who's been with us since the very beginning of *Lavender*, writing about this community as a whole, with a focus on the leather and kink community. In his piece, he informs us how his mother helped this community by writing books about her experience as Steve came out; she assisted so many others in sorting through their

thoughts and feelings. I daresay that the books he included in the tribute also represent a gift guide of sorts; I encourage people to buy them for yourself and anyone else who could benefit from them. I am thankful for Mary Borhek.

While John Townsend offers up a fun gift guide of holiday-themed shows and performances to see this season, he also gives us a look into how the Children's Theatre Company is focusing on transgender issues and breaking the binary that binds us. When reading his piece, I encourage you to step back and remember that we're not talking about college-level courses or continuing ed training sessions where people are talking on an advanced level, we're talking about kids and young adults. What a tremendous time for the Children's Theatre to put emphasis on changing how they present scripts and works as well as the language that is used, not just in materials and presentations, but even between themselves as employees. I am grateful for this work and the collaboration with the community; this initiative serves as an example for others and makes our society better.

Finally, I am thankful for the recognition of the Minnesota Magazine & Publishing Association for our 11 Excellence Awards and the coveted Magazine of the Year title. I am thankful for our contributors and employees through the years who have made this happen. I give thanks for the readers and advertisers without whom it would not be possible.

With you and with thanks,

Andy ■



The advertisement features a large image of Tom Brady in a dark blue long-sleeved shirt, holding a football. The background is a cloudy sky. In the top right corner is the TAG Heuer logo and the text "TAGHeuer SWISS AVANT-GARDE SINCE 1860". In the center right is a detailed image of a TAG Heuer Carrera watch with a black dial, multiple sub-dials, and a black strap. The hashtag "#DontCrackUnderPressure" is written in white over the football. In the bottom left corner is the "jb hudson JEWELERS" logo and address: "901 NICOLLET • DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS EST 1885". In the bottom right corner is the text: "TAG HEUER CARRERA CALIBRE HEUER 01 Four world championships and two league MVP awards. Forty-six game winning drives. The longest winning streak in NFL history. Tom Brady is a champion, and champions never crack under pressure."

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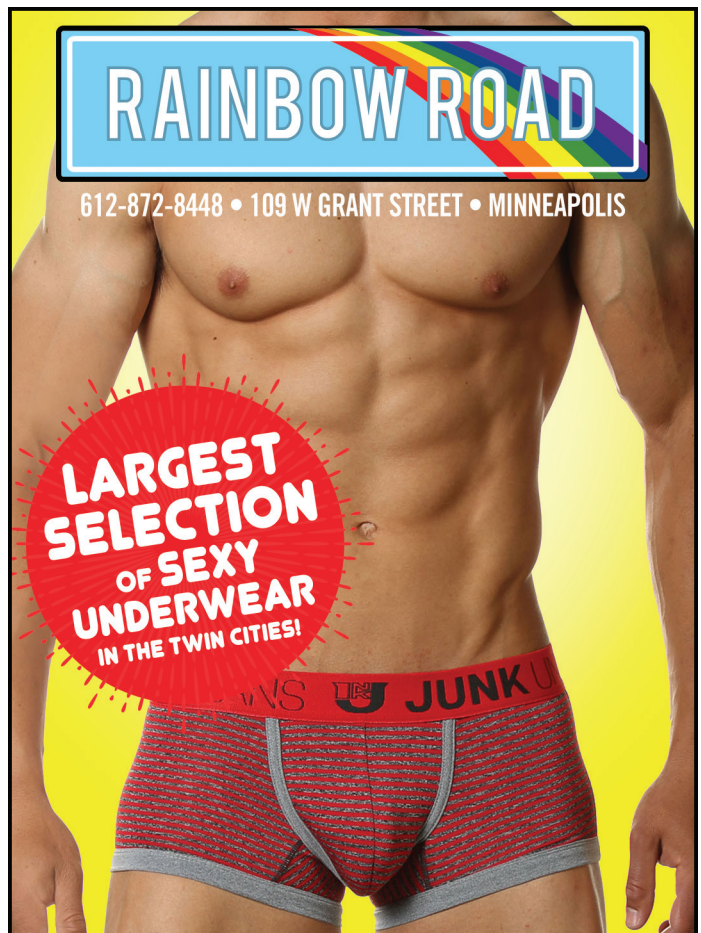
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OUR LAVENDER

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

From Star Dust to Star Dust: Getting Above Our Raising

We're all made of stardust, they say. Yes, if "we" is expanded to include everything; rocks and seas, molds and lichens, and creatures with backbones and without. In a time when some seek to put themselves above "others," numerous branches of science are discovering that many creatures' lives are similar to our own.

Anyone living with a cat or dog (or ferret, rabbit, iguana, etc.) knows they communicate through a variety of personalities and forces of will. Two books in this issue's gift guide section go deeper to explore two types of beings whose consciousness far exceed our preconceived notions.

Sy Montgomery's *The Soul of an Octopus* offers stunning examples of how these spineless animals show a broad range of emotions and intellectual abilities, including curiosity, affection, and even a sense of humor when responding (or not) with their keepers.

Octopuses and trees live on vastly different time scales. The cephalopods, for all their intelligence, have surprisingly short lifespans, while trees are just "school children" as centenarians, according to Peter Wohlleben, in *The Hidden Life of Trees*. Trees, even grasses, he asserts, feel pain, alarm, concern, and can communicate these feelings (albeit

slowly) to neighbors and offspring. Alerted, others produce chemicals to repel invaders, or send food to needy family members.

Nearly all animals sleep, many with REM sleep like humans. Studies show fruit flies interrupted in their slumbers fly erratically the next morning. Rats whose brains are monitored electronically while running a maze, show the same patterns in sleep, and researchers can pinpoint their location in the dream maze.

The star-inspired dung beetle, it transpires, directs its journey on earth in relationship to the Milky Way.

The Old Testament author exalted humankind saying (Genesis 1:26): "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Others may subscribe to the opinion of Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverer of the theory of evolution, who in 1869 wrote in his book, *The Malay Archipelago*: "Trees and fruits, no less the varied productions of the animal kingdom, do not appear to be organized with exclusive reference to the use and convenience of mankind." ■



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TRAVEL | BY CARLA WALDEMAR



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To go from Upper Austria to Lower Austria, you travel...east? Logic may not prevail here, but beauty does. So, start the pageant in Salzburg and prepare to be awed. I came for the rocks. The stony mountains are beyond amazing. And so is Salzburg's rock star, Mozart. Might as well christen the town Mozartburg, but it's actually named for the white gold that made its fortune: salt (salz).

I wasn't alone in paying homage to the musical virtuoso whose 260th birthday is this year. On Mozartplatz, tourists brandishing selfie sticks posed before his statue. It's one of the town's public plazas surrounding the cathedral where Mozart's parents were married, their baby boy was baptized, and, not much later, played the organ. In his birth house on Getreidegasse — a Roman road that morphed into the medieval main drag here in "the Rome of the North" — you can spy his infant violin, a lock of hair, his silken wallet, and the most authentic portrait of all those be-wigged lookalikes.

Across the river you'll come upon the family's later residence, housing the piano upon which the five-year-old composed, along with employment contracts and manuscripts. In the gift shop, his portrait enhances every possible surface, from golf balls to Hello Mozart t-shirts, from tissue packets to rubber duckies.

You can hear his music all around town, from concerts at the Residenz and Mirabell Mansion to St. Peter Stiftskeller, the oldest restaurant in town. Between courses in a candle-lit chamber, musicians in velvet waistcoats back a pair of lusty opera singers.

Salzburg's history museum, facing Mozart's statue, includes an exhibit devoted to Mozart Mania, which didn't erupt (poor kid) until decades after his death. (Michael Haydn stole all the glory while Wolfgang was alive.)

It adjoins the DomQuartier, which connects buildings once the domain of rulers alone and now open to us mere mortals to wander a maze of 180 rooms framing three courtyards. In the ruler's former Residenz, "the political heart of Salzburg," Mozart made his court debut. A passage leads to the organ loft of the grand Dom (cathedral), then the art gallery (lots of



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rosy Rubens); the Panorama Terrace overlooking the streetscape; and treasures from St. Peter's Abbey, the oldest in German-speaking lands.

But Salzburg isn't frozen in its past. To unravel current thoughts, explore its pair of contemporary art museums — one presenting visual art as social critique (think Hogarth, Goya), climaxing in walls covered with graffiti manifestos such as "Brexit, You Brex My Heart" and "Trump, Don't Push the Button." The second, on a mountaintop ascended via elevator, it's Exiles as Modernist: musician Schoenberg to artist Kokoschka, plus photos of book burnings in 1938.

That mountaintop is home, too, to the museum's restaurant M32, showcasing classic fare with modern touches — sweetbreads with mushrooms; salad of duck liver, apples and bacon; roast deer. Oh, and dessert! That three-peaked soufflé called Salzberger Nockerln.

Speaking of fine eats, a lunch at K & K, amid the town's who's who on Lederhosen Thursdays (dirndls, too; they're no longer just for holidays), also pays homage to tradition: venison carpaccio, rack of deer, and my choice, a classic composition of veal liver with potato-celery puree and apples.

Salzburg's gay scene sizzles at bars like: 3Steins, Be-Five, Daimler's, and Mexx; gay civil unions at Mirabell, that gorgeous Baroque palace. For more info on this gay-friendly city, where even the stoplights feature gay and lesbian couples, visit www.salzburg.info/en/.

Then, just when you think the visuals cannot be improved upon, they are. Journeying around the hiking/skiing haunts surrounding Bad Gastein and its neighbors, I kept snapping calendar-worthy shots of snow-frosted mountaintops melting into green fir and blazing aspen in valleys of sheep and cattle (soon to be dinner).

Bad Gastein itself, once "the Monte Carlo of the Alps" thanks to its healing thermal waters and resorts for the rich and famous, has faded into a ghost town, its wondrous waterfall the most vibrant sign of life.

That and the enchanting chapel of St. Nicklaus, faint with 14th-century frescoes, below Hotel Miramonte, where I'd stay forever if they let me: a minimalist setting framing drop-dead views, with cowhide carpets and art books strewn everywhere, even in its glorious spa. Hiking trails start right outside the door.

We patrolled the countryside to lunch on local fare at Unterbergerwirt, with more letters in its name than seats. The pumpkin soup, one of Austria's best-kept secrets, was superb, as was the local lamb and fish that followed. Then, dinner at Hotel Bertahof, just as cozy, where dindled servers delivered deer salami, duck liver salad, then the rest of the bird crisp-roasted with currants and apples.

"I saw you hiking yesterday," winked my cabbie as he put me on the train to Krems, centerpiece of the Danube's Wachau Valley and a fine base for exploring the vineyards climbing the river's banks. But first, explore the town itself, popping into the blaze of Baroque churches. Nothing traditional, however, about its Museum of Caricature, whose very facade mimics the peaks of a jester's cap. "Caricature," a guide explained, "must have an opinion," so political cartoons strong on black humor prevail here. The exhibit "Culture on Four Wheels" uses autos as a metaphor for power and sex, as in the two-by-two lineup of cars at Noah's Ark and trio of European leaders caught endlessly circling a roundabout.

Relief from comic relief at Kaiser von Österreich, whose informal setting serves as launching pad for forward local food, such as homemade noodles with wild mushrooms and beef tongue; roast catfish atop pumpkin risotto; or venison with red cabbage. The next night, modern takes on classics with Blauenstein's prix-fixe: char with figs and orange; salsify soup; saddle of veal and sweetbreads with potato-pumpkin dumplings; and crepes slathered with apricot jam.

I'd gazed at those apricot trees while floating down the Danube as

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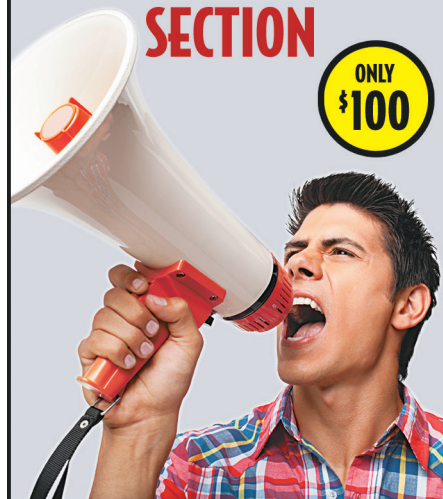
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we cruised to Spitz, and time to eat again. Gasthof Prankl welcomed us with a glass of Gruner Veltlinger, “the most famous wine of Austria” in “Austria’s most famous wine region,” where vineyards pleat every surface of the Wachau Valley, as I learned at Wine Experience WinzerKrems. The 990-member co-op’s exhibits explain terroir and varietals: GV, Riesling and the red Blauer Zweigelt (tastings, too).

Spitz boasts a hilltop castle of 1285 from which to view the world of wine. Then explore the world of water below at the Danube Shipping Museum, with relics of long-ago wrecks and intricate models of medieval merchant ships and teams of horses to pull them upstream until the advent of steamships in the 1800s. From there, it’s only a 50-mile hop to Vienna, and (sob!) home. For info, visit www.austria.info/us and www.salzbureg.info.

Endnote: Vienna off the Grid

Vienna inside its Ring Road is, in a word, stately: all opulent, oversized buildings. It’s also crammed with tour groups, buskers, and ticket sellers in powdered wigs. I love it. But I also love to discover neighborhoods where people live, work, and play, unhindered by tourists bearing selfie sticks. (For Vienna in a Day, see the June 23 issue.)

I tromped from Operngasse west to Mariahilfer Strasse, poking into boutiques, galleries and cafés, starting at Heuer, a veggie garden-cum-café that’s packed for breakfast till after the opera lets out. On to Radlager, a bar/bistro, music venue and bike shop. Next door, Sussi specializes in teatime amid tongue-in-cheek plush. At Comod, a gay gent sells lacy ladies’ lingerie. Pur-a, its counterpart, is a pristine fashion icon using fabrics free of color or prints — just “pure.”

Point of Sale does a bang-up breakfast for the neighborhood’s bohos while multitasking as a gallery and source for modern furniture. Flo Vintage scores fashions from 1880 to 1980. For vintage from the ’30s and ’40s, Nostalgie is your spot.

Babette sells cookbooks and spices, while nearby Alt Wien roasts and brews coffee. It’s Nachbarin for elite ladies’ designs, with a stop at Café Sperl, where nothing has changed for a hundred years. Then scan up-and-coming designers’ duds at Unikatessen and eye-catching casuals at We Bandits. Phil (short for philosophy) is the ultimate concept store, combining books, music, lamps, furniture and dreams. If that doesn’t do it for you, head to Buy Yourself Happy and test their claim. ■

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Mercedes Iman-Diamond Captures Miss Gay 90's 2016 Title

On the evening of Oct. 27, the annual Miss Gay 90's Pageant took place at the La Femme Show Lounge upstairs in the megabar. Brandonna Dupri-LaReese was emcee for the event. La Femme show director Prada Diamond made several stunning appearances throughout the night. Nine lovely contestants competed for the title, the most coveted one among local bars. Categories were evening gown, question and answer, and talent. Mercedes-Iman Diamond won first place. Domita DeBaun Sanchez from Des Moines, Iowa, was first runner-up, and Martina Maraccino was second runner-up. At this year's pageant, Kamaree Williams, Miss Gay 90's 2015, stepped down from her title after a successful reign; she is also the reigning Miss City of the Lakes 2016 until next June, the first time in memory that a titleholder has worn both crowns simultaneously. All in all, the pageant was a highlight of Halloween week festivities at the Gay 90's. ■



Miss Gay 90's 2016, Mercedes Iman-Diamond. Photo by George Holdgrafer

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LAVENDER WINS MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR



The 20th Annual Minnesota Magazine & Publishing Association (MMPA) Excellence Awards were held on Thursday, Nov. 10, 2016. The awards recognize both print and digital platforms for pieces and projects published between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. *Lavender* is the only magazine in the MMPA representing the rainbow community in the state. And, after being judged by our peers from across the organization representing all types and sizes of publications, *Lavender* was named Magazine of the Year for 2016.

This honor was first presented by the MMPA in 2010 and is based on the accumulated awards a publication has won through the years, since 1997. Previous winners have been: 2010, *Minnesota Monthly*; 2011, *Exhibitor Magazine*; 2012, *Twin Cities Business*; 2013, *Lake Superior Magazine*; 2014, *Experience Life*; and 2015, *Mpls.St.Paul Magazine*. *Lavender* is in good company, something which has pushed us to strive for excellence. To not only have the mission of creating a publication for a marginalized, under-represented community, but to be recognized for where it fits within the larger community is a great honor. Thank you for giving us this opportunity.

We were aware that we were in the top five publications under consideration for the award, so I did make sure that I had a few notes prepared, in case our name was called. And then it was.

And the applause was heartening.

When I got to the podium, this is close to what I said:

Lavender has been a biweekly magazine for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and ally community in the region for over 21 years, just one year longer than the MMPA has existed. We make sure that it is free and presented online, without barriers, so that as many people as possible have access to it, regardless of where they are, regardless of whether or not they are in the closet.

Lavender is a fairly simple magazine in that it presents daily aspects of life for people to be able to see themselves and to see each other. But it is also political by virtue of its very existence. For over 21 years, Lavender has been building an archive of this community on a biweekly basis. Proof that the people of this community have been here all along. The people will not be erased. The people will not be converted. The people will not go back into the closet.

And then there was the standing ovation.

I will cling to the response of my peers to those last three statements as we move forward.

Thank you so much for being with us on this journey. We share this honor with you.

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**Jim Brickman
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December 29, 2016
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**Louie Anderson Live
New Year's Eve 2016
December 31, 2016
7PM**



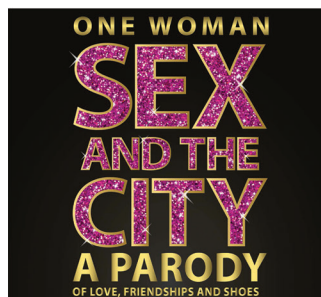
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**Madeleine Peyroux &
Rickie Lee Jones
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Amendment Defense Act (FADA), which seeks to challenge by vendors and businesses suffering to avoid litigation costs on the basis of sincerely held religious beliefs. Not only is there a huge potential for exposure to discrimination against the providers of the FADA, a sincere belief or conviction that one's biological sex is immutable "and something determined only by 'anatomy at the time of birth'" is so incredibly dangerous, once accepted as a legitimate basis to discriminate, when all, weren't the Founding Fathers morally convinced that persons inferior? Isn't misogyny built into the Old Testament? And how can we have to pin a pink star on some future day of reckoning?

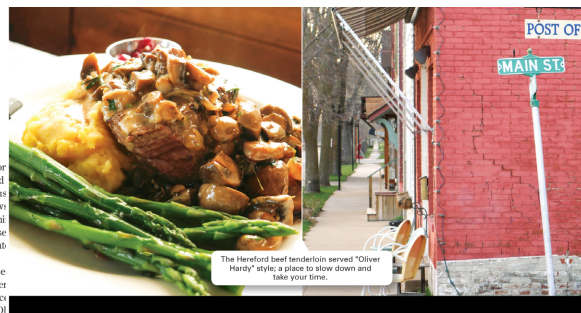
But that's nothing compared to what legislators are and are to do as trans kids.

As time takes us further and further from the ancient world, for gods and goddesses a greater sense of gender identity to forget what it means to be a 15-year-old transgender individual, without support, totally alone and afraid.

And what does that ever have to do with society in general?

That they're not kind worthy enough to live in a place true, authentic self.

I understand that some of "mainstream" America (that is) are afraid of social change that legitimizes love for all. When it comes to bathrooms, locker rooms, related sports. I also get it that Sunday services are the



How To Harbor View

[illegible]

2016 MMPA EXCELLENCE AWARDS

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How To Capture Your Wedding Day in Photography by Melissa Hesse

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2016 Spring Arts & Dining

Single-Topic Issue
2015 Fall Wedding Issue:
Finders Keepers

Feature Article

(PrEP)are Yourself: Demystifying HIV Prevention by Shane Lueck

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(PrEP)ARE YOURSELF
DEMYSTIFYING
HIV PREVENTION

By
**SHANE
LUECK**

PrEP. It's a buzzword currently making its way around the community. Just like diversity was only a matter of months ago. Everyone in the community (mostly males) is talking about it. Are you on PrEP? Why not? And the questions go on.

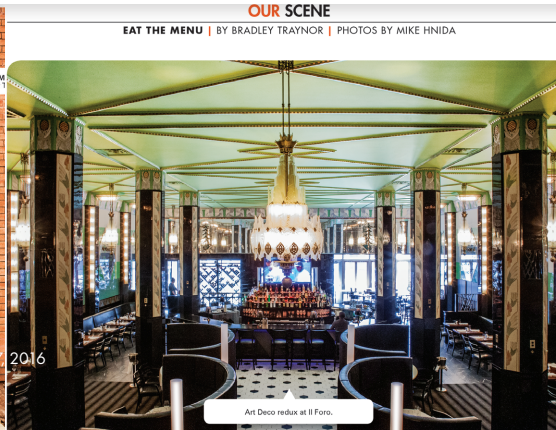
HIV/AIDS in Minnesota. That year, 3,000 people were diagnosed. These numbers are significant enough to use the term "epidemic," which means the rate of new infections and other HIV prevention methods is out of control.

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) has been shown to reduce new HIV infections in the general population, but it only works if patients know about it and take it as prescribed.

Despite its recent claim to fame as nity, PrEP has been around for over was approved by the U.S. tion (FDA) for use as an July 2012, it was approve

HOW TO CAPTURE YOUR WEDDING DAY IN PHOTOGRAPHY

BY MELISSA HESSE



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FINDERS KEEPERS

BY ANDY LIEN

he saying "Finders keepers, losers weepers." It goes along with "you win, you lose" in my world. The idea is that there is something that we want and need, but it's a fleeting something.

g us that we want and need, but it's a hecting something, often it when we find it. But, good golly, we need to find it. I've re looking for it.

is wanting and looking, where do we go? More bars than g to wherever people are on the spectrum or the Kinsey le. Scale of Attraction (go ahead, Google it, a new), d welcoming churches, the more of a chance there's a in a few. Book stores, the gym, the light rail platform, the ents (because why not throw in a shameless plug?), sports ances, volunteering, and Meet Up groups are also good he same options we always hear about that work for some of us who are still looking apparently didn't find what we want.

current and past wedding issues, the couples in our Wed-
 es met at a Coming Out event at school (Hannah and Lind-

Search ("Making Yourself Marriage Material" on pg. ally recruiting the most qualified matches for our most swine right for that (translation: I like that).

But what's the end game? It's not always marriage we now know, it's that people can figure out what their relationship and commitment is...which hopefully agrees better half is thinking. If it is marriage, what kind of Lord knows, this world is full of grey; particularly the traditional gender roles aren't the easy (and sometimes out) who does what in a marriage, what do we do?

Luckily for us, today's marriage is a hybrid of risk, arguably for whichever genders are represented. I've how to be in a long-term committed relationship when I literally don't need anyone. Literally. I do every because of being a liberated woman. The people I've

when I've found them, which is how I prefer to date, so sufficient, too. It's hardly a political campaign or democ-



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A Breakthrough in Transgender Inclusion at the Children's Theatre



Photo by Michelle Wright

The Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis ranks as the nation's flagship children's theater and is esteemed as one of the foremost children's theaters on the planet. Therefore, their programs and productions are profoundly influential. That's why their recent initiatives in transgender inclusion in classes and auditions marks the beginning of a whole new dimension of how theater is administrated.

In 2013 CTC developed "ACT One," a platform for access, diversity, and inclusion for their audiences, programs, staff, and board. The words "Access," "Connect," and "Transform" were named as interdependent

words for an action guide for a future when CTC is seen as a home for all people and all families as a reflection of the community. This platform sets out to include more people from a broader income range, persons of color, persons with disabilities, and a wider range of those of different sexual orientations and gender identities.

During the 2014–2015 season, OutFront Minnesota presented Trans Trainings coordinated by Roxanne Anderson, who many know as one of the two Twin Cities Pride grand marshals this past June. Approximately 100 staff members attended the Transgender 101 training. Fifty teaching art-

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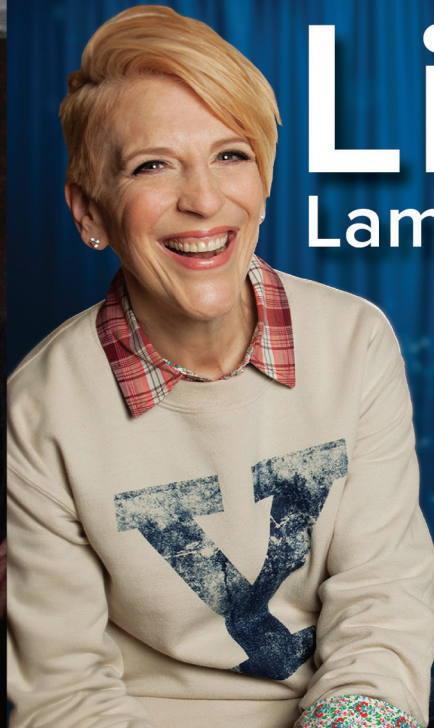
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“All classes start with pronoun go arounds, where students and teachers get the opportunity to introduce themselves with the name they want used and the pronoun they use, if any. In audition situations we also ask what genders actors feel comfortable playing so we don’t make an assumption a student isn’t comfortable with.

ists attended the Gender Inclusion in Theatre Arts training on site at CTC. About 30 teaching artists attended the Gender Inclusion in Neighborhood Bridges (in public schools and residencies). Another 50 comprised a group of production staff, stage managers, and acting company members who attended the Transgender Inclusion for Student and Adult Actors training.

This spirit resonates with the implementation of a trans inclusion policy and the posting of “Safe Space” signage in classrooms, offices, and program areas as welcoming to the GLBT community. Trans terminology has also been learned and shared in the Transgender 101 training.

Deb Girdwood is CTC’s director of access and inclusion. She amplifies the importance of this focus on language: “We are continually working on non-binary language. In some cases it’s easier than others, i.e. changing the pre-recorded announcements, training customer service and educational staff to adapt their more standard language to say ‘folks,’ ‘friends,’ ‘families,’ instead of ‘boys and girls,’ ‘ladies and gentlemen,’ ‘ma’am or sir.’ In other cases, unlearning informal gendered language, such as with staff, takes more practice. We try to continuously remind staff of the importance of eliminating gendered language in the workplace (the casual: ‘hey guys,’ ‘ladies, should we get lunch?’) and this is certainly hard to unlearn for many of us.”

Girdwood also relates that “our anti-bias taskforce has an interesting challenge when it comes to reviewing scripts and stories. One example of a recent change to a script was where there had been an audience interactive segment that asked for ‘boys to do this’ and ‘girls to do that’ and we changed it to parts of the audience: left side, right side. Once explained, the changes were received well and enthusiastically. I think the biggest challenge is in the casual moments of workplace discussion. We’re working on the balance of stressing the importance without mandating language. There are many identified common micro-aggressions for that matter to regularly work on; it’s ongoing and intersectional.”

Micro-aggression is a term that has come into common usage regarding transgender issues. This has compelled looking at dynamics that arise in relation to communications with and about transgender people. OutFront, Anderson’s RARE Productions, and the Transforming Families organization are vigilant in addressing this. And all three have been instrumental in honing the CTC institution’s understandings about the subtleties of transphobia and exclusion.

For example, there is a view that denial and minimalization is occurring when someone says “a kindergartner can’t be trans.” Someone who sees an injustice against a trans person but feels it is not their place to speak up because they themselves don’t identify as trans might actually be an evasion. Being unconscious of cisgender privilege is considered to be a major concern.

However, as Shakespeare says “the play’s the thing,” so of course CTC has delved into how trans awareness influences the very practice and study of theater at the audition, classroom, rehearsal, and performance levels. Ellie McKay, CTC’s director of theatre arts training, points out “in most plays you’ll find, within the first few pages, a character breakdown that will include either an ‘F’ or an ‘M’ to indicate whether characters are male or female. We are interested in scripts that feature trans characters and characters that do not have to fall into an M or F category. Not only do we want trans and non-binary students to have

roles available that represent them, but we also want to make sure all of our students have access to stories, perspectives, and characters from a diverse gender spectrum. As an example, in one of our recent early childhood classes called ‘Wild West,’ a teacher wanted to create characters and offered them the opportunity to play a cowboy, cowgirl, or a cowpoke. Rather than *Twelve Dancing Princesses* we titled *Twelve Dancing Royals* to eliminate the specific gender binary.”

McKay continues, “All classes start with pronoun go arounds, where students and teachers get the opportunity to introduce themselves with the name they want used and the pronoun they use, if any. In audition situations we also ask what genders actors feel comfortable playing so we don’t make an assumption a student isn’t comfortable with. It’s common in theater for women to be asked to play male roles; the reverse is less common. During auditions, rather than breaking the group into boys and girls to learn vocal parts, we ask students which song they’d like to sing. We want our students to feel confident and supported in our program; and making sure we’re not asking them to play genders outside their comfort zone, or pigeon hole them based on gender expression, is part of that equation. Additionally, as a faculty we’ve been working to make a clear distinction between a character’s gender and an actor’s gender. For example, when teaching choreography: where we might have said ‘girls stand here and boys stand here,’ we might say ‘female characters over here and male characters over here’ and ideally finding space for characters that aren’t necessarily boys or girls.”

Girdwood says CTC hopes to embed and design its thinking and programs with trans folks in mind through systemic practices and discussion of gender inclusion. Cat Hammond, who serves as the theater’s GLBTQ community liaison says, “I feel that CTC is committed to doing this work the right way, directly seeking input from queer and trans people, listening to that input, and acting on it. All the way up to the organization’s leaders, I’ve seen a genuine investment in this process and willingness to make real changes, even when it requires time, money, or humility. These are not superficial gestures of allyship. The folks at CTC are enacting changes that literally make their spaces more accessible to people of marginalized genders. I am honored to be a part of this work, and I feel that CTC is setting a tremendous example for other organizations.”

Roxanne Anderson points out, “This has been an ongoing process. It’s not a ‘one and done.’ No 1.5-hour training or workshop makes you an ally. No Trans 101 will make you an expert. CTC went for long-term change and impact; this is what makes a difference. They invested. They paid fair market rate, and hired trans-identified folks to facilitate.”

The embodiment of trans consciousness in CTC’s stage product is actually on the horizon. Their Threshold: New Works in Development program will create a piece by the iconoclastic trans theater artist, Taylor Mac, titled *The Fre*. Nigel Smith directs what is called an exploration of radical empathy and a celebration of getting down and dirty. Indeed, CTC has made a breakthrough in transgender inclusion that few, if any, other theaters have made before. It could be a prototype for other theaters around the country. ■

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[by John Townsend]

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www.chanhassentheatres.com

2. A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Charles Dickens's timeless cautionary tale of a man who gave his life to greed, only to see his life pass before his eyes on Christmas Eve night, is one of world literature's most resounding calls to conscience. Once again, Joe Chvala has directed the story of Ebenezer Scrooge with the terrific JC Cutler in the role again as well. The Guthrie's annual offering of the classic is perhaps the region's major holiday event. Stellar production values and marvelous topnotch casts have always made this particular show something that you truly have to see.

Especially if you've never seen it.

Through Dec. 30
Guthrie Theater's Wurtele Thrust Stage, 818 S 2nd St., Minneapolis
612-377-2224

www.guthrietheater.org

3. A CHRISTMAS CAROLE PETERSEN

Tod Petersen revives his classic personal story about what it's like being the gay son of a sweet straight mother. Petersen has crafted his relationship with his mother into remarkable solo stage fare and this particular creation is the ideal piece for queer kids and their families — a wonderful way to bring us all together!

Nov. 30–Dec. 23
Ritz Theater
345 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis
612-339-3003

www.latteda.org

4. CINDERELLA

What is perhaps the most famous fairy tale of all time is turned on its head (and then some) in this rollicking, camp, and crossgender re-imagining of a humble girl who wins the heart of the unattainable Prince Charming. Children's Theatre has turned this into one of the most popular holiday shows in the region. You may well bust a gut laughing because the slapstick in this show is off-the-charts brilliant!

Through Jan. 8
Children's Theatre Company
2400 3rd Ave. S, Minneapolis
612-874-0400

www.childrenstheatrecompany.org

5. THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

This Tony Award-winner for Best Play is a truly unique mystery thriller based on the Mark Haddon novel. When an adolescent math prodigy with Asperg-

er's Syndrome is accused of murdering a neighbor's dog after midnight, he finds himself as a suspect. He goes on a journey that makes him face his family, the culprit, and himself. This is an ideal holiday choice for its uplifting view of the human spirit and the spirit of a youth intent on finding the truth.

Nov. 29 – Dec. 4
Orpheum Theatre
910 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
800-982-2787

www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org

6. IRVING BERLIN'S WHITE CHRISTMAS

Back in 1954 the film version of *White Christmas* starring Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney, and Vera Ellen was one of the true critical and box office blockbusters of its decade.

Since then it has also been adapted into a stage musical and the Ordway has become renowned for its productions of the piece. *White Christmas* creator, Irving Berlin (1888–1989) ranks as one of the foremost musical theater creators in American history. He was actually a Russian immigrant who embraced life in the U.S. and left us with a timeless body

of work.

Dec. 8–31
Ordway Center,
345 Washington St., St. Paul
651-224-4222

www.ordway.org

7. THE MAGIC DREIDELS

Minnesota Jewish Theatre revives their delightful Hanukkah offering, *The Magic Dreidels*, adapted for stage by Jenna Zark from the book by Eric A. Kimmel. A dreidel is a top that spins. It is especially popular at Hanukkah time. Zark's play has a goblin in a well and a stellar cast that includes Julie Ann Nevill, Jacy Johnson Becker, Alex Brightwell, and Gabriel Murphy. Directed by Michael Kissin.

Dec. 6–21
Highland Park Community Center
1978 Ford Parkway, St. Paul
651-647-4315

www.mnjewishtheatre.org

8. LA NATIVIDAD

Performed in English and Spanish, the story of the birth of the Holy Child echoes the Mexican tradition of Las Posadas. In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre collaborates with St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and contextualizes the Nativity in terms of contemporary experience.

This promenade-style production has giant puppets and flesh-and-blood actors play Maria and her fiancé Jose as they go along 15th Avenue to see if someone will offer them shelter. Drawn from the gospels of Luke and Matthew,

Dec. 15–22
In the Heart of the Beast's Avalon Theatre, 1500 E Lake St.
Minneapolis
612-721-2535

www.brownpaperstickers.com

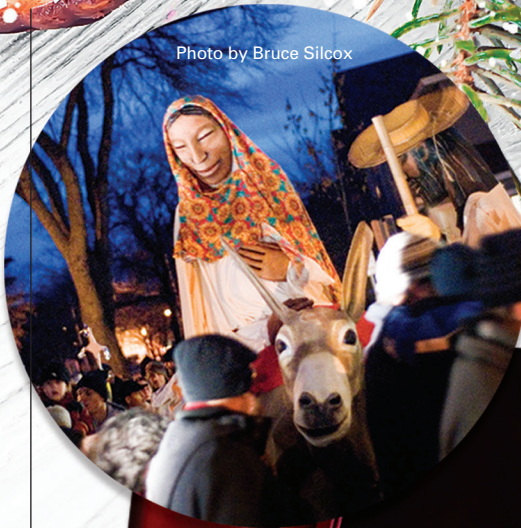


Photo by Bruce Silcox

8



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noah wolf



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HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by John Townsend]

9. KAREN SHERMAN'S SOFT GOODS

Bessie Award-winner Karen Sherman looks into the essence of manual labor and how the effort of human beings facilitates the art of theater and lighting. The ensemble is comprised of 10 dancers and theater technicians. Sherman's background is unique indeed. She sings, is a fifth-generation lasso-spinner, has studied trapeze artistry, and is experienced as a carpenter. Given the nature of *Soft Goods*, it sounds like it could well be a total expression of Sherman's wide-ranging apprehension of numerous theatrical elements.

Dec. 8-10
Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Ave.,
Minneapolis
612-375-7600
www.walkerart.org

10. THE LION IN WINTER

This hit 1966 play is set at Christmas in 1183 when England's Henry II kept his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, locked up in a power play for the ages. One of their sons is gay and in 1966 this was significant as a gay representation in what was an overwhelmingly straight body of Broadway offerings. A great opportunity to see the nation's flagship regional theater turn on the classical tradition they are noted for.

Through Dec. 31
Guthrie Theater's Proscenium Stage
818 S 2nd St., Minneapolis
612-377-2224
www.guthrietheater.org

11. THE NORWEGIANS

Jane Froiland and Sara Marsh play two southern women in Minnesota. This pair hires a nice hit man to kill their ex-boyfriends. Fans of the Coen Brothers' *Fargo* and romantic comedies will probably find this right up their alley. Directed by Joel Sass.

Definitely an ideal choice if you are looking for something beyond the usual holiday fare. A project produced by Dark & Stormy Productions and The Mount Curve Company. Associate Producers: North Star Theatricals and Triumph Creative.

Dec. 8-30
Grain Belt Warehouse, 77 13th Ave. NE
Studio 202, Minneapolis
612-401-4506
www.darkstormy.org

12. NUTCRACKER (NOT SO) SUITE

This camp spoof of gay composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Christmas ballet classic, *The Nutcracker*, was originally choreographed by Myron Johnson as an annual offering for the Ballet of the Dolls. After being set aside for several years, James Sewell Ballet revived the piece with Johnson at the helm again last year. Now it returns in 2016. Be assured that this will be among the most, if not the most hilarious holiday show in the Twin Cities. If you've never seen, then you must see it!

Dec. 2-18
Cowles Center, 528 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
612-206-3600
www.thecowlescenter.org

13. THE SLEEPING BEAUTY IN THE WOOD

A sensual and subversive look into what the Sleeping Beauty of fairy tale fame might have dreamed about during the century she slept all the way through. How fitting that the group producing it is Collective Unconscious Performance. Justin Leaf choreographs and plays the title role. Written by Katharine Sherman. Directed by David Hanzal. This will surely be a cross-gender holiday treat!

Dec. 2-11
Red Eye Theater, 15 W 14th St., Minneapolis
800-838-3006
www.collectiveunconsciousperformance.com

14. SEX IN THE DARK

If you are looking for something in the spirit of defiance and celebration then you may want to check out Uprising Theatre Company at the Phoenix. Issues of body size, body image, and how society makes us internalize judgmental attitudes about those things are delved into. Moreover, *Sex in the Dark* explores another issue: transgender people wanting to be loved unconditionally. When might loving one's self become a radical act in its own right?

Dec. 2-10
Phoenix Theater, 2605 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
612-377-2285
www.phoenixtheatreminn.org

15. THE SOUL OF GERSHWIN: THE MUSICAL JOURNEY OF AN AMERICAN KLEZMER

It's the early 1900s in New York City, a melting pot of different cultures and musical genres: Yiddish theater, Jewish liturgical melodies, pop of the time, folk, blues, jazz, and opera. Your narrator is legendary composer George Gershwin. If anyone ever had rhythm, it was him! Klezmer refers to a Jewish musical tradition that came out of Eastern Europe. Ideal as an alternative Hanukkah choice.

Dec. 2-31
Park Square Theatre, 20 W 7th Place, St. Paul
651-291-7005
www.parksquaretheatre.org

16. TCGMC'S GAY HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR

The region's great gay men's chorus always presents one of the great performance events of the holiday season. This year's Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus offering is modeled after a television variety show and features the Copper Street Brass Quintet. TCGMC has been going for 36 years strong and has over 150 singers! On top of that, the general public and the GLBT community adore them!

Dec. 9-11
Ted Mann Concert Hall, 2128 Fourth St. S
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
612-624-2345
www.tcgmc.org

17. WHAT THE ELF!?

The region's premiere comedy theater consistently produces a terrific holiday revue, not to mention that their skits always include queer issues. Denzel Belin joins BNW regulars Lauren Anderson, Taj Ruler, Tom Reed, and Ryan Nelson. I guarantee you have never seen anything like the workshop's annual zany version of *The 12 Days of Christmas*!

Through Jan. 28
Brave New Workshop, 824 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
612-332-6620
www.bravenewworkshop.com



Photo by Chris Holden



Photo by Rachel Joyce



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HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Andy Lien]

1. KRUPS SAVOY 12-CUP THERMAL ET351

The newest coffee maker on the market features a thermal carafe, which purportedly keeps coffee warm for up to four hours, but my road testing has had me sipping still-warm coffee the morning after. I'm not proud of this, I'm proud of the coffee maker. And, because there's no burner for it to languish upon, there's no burner taste, whether one or 21 hours after brewing. Win-win. And it's not glass, so there's one less thing for me to worry about dropping on my concrete loft floors. After all, I get a little clumsy when under-caffeinated. Setting the coffee to brew the night before doesn't mean I'm any more coordinated as I reach for the pot.

Amazon
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2. BEEKMAN 1802 SPECIALTY FOOD CLUB

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4. ANGIE'S BOOMCHICKAPOP HOLIDRIZZLE FLAVORS

I can't be trusted around kettle corn. That Angie's out of Mankato packages it up and makes it so easy for me to grab is my favorite kind of enabling. This season, they've got something to make our days be merry and bright: dark chocolatey sea salt, frosted sugar cookie, and white chocolate and peppermint Holidrizzle kettle corn flavors. And I want to thank the Lunds & Byerly's on Hennepin for introducing it to me for a 2/\$6 price tag, it's sure to be something I'll use as auxiliary snacks for entertaining this season. Okay, and breakfast, lunch, and supper.

\$3-\$4
www.lundsandbyerlys.com

5. THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF: BIG BOOK OF BAKING

This is one of my favorite shows that I watch on Netflix. Community member Sue Perkins is an absolute delight with the rest of the team of Mary Berry, Paul Hollywood, and Sue's comedy partner, Mel Giedroyc, as well as all the earnest competitors. I admit it, I ordered this one for myself knowing that I'd get it, page through it, and probably put it down to just admire from afar. Not only are the baked items really gorgeous and daunting, but the math and measurement conversions would do me in. So, perhaps for Christmas, what I really want is someone to go through my book and write in what everything would be in cups and tablespoons.

Amazon
\$36

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HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Andy Lien]

There's something about having a collection of mugs that speaks to who we are. My collection includes

Wonder Woman, one from my alma mater, a "Keep Calm and Carry On," a few thrown by some friends who are potters, and other ones picked up along the way at significant times. They're universal as gifts and great for both stocking stuffers or office presents. OK, not all of these. It depends on your coworkers, I guess.

1. FEMME MUG

Sometimes you just need to make your mark on your world one mug at a time. This one's for the femmes.

\$25

Find on Etsy:
bothandpottery

2. QUEER AF MUG

The mug itself has an eye-catching black gloss finish, while the underside of it has the even better finale. It speaks for itself, it speaks for you.

\$30

Find on Etsy:
MegBrownCeramics

3. GREAT GAYS HEAT CHANGING MUG

What looks to be a mug of closed doors becomes a delightful history lesson when you pour in a hot beverage and 14 of the world's most famous gays proudly emerge. Michelangelo, Michel Foucault, Freddie Mercury; talk about star bucks! And there's also Willa Cather, Tchaikovsky, Sappho, Alan Turing, Audre Lorde, Yukio Mishima, and Gertrude Stein.

\$15

Amazon

4. TRANS LOGO MUG

This attractive mug is simultaneously coded and out in the open with the logo of the trans community on the side. If you know, you know. And that's a mighty powerful position to be in, particularly as you drink your coffee and prepare for the day ahead.

\$40

Find on Etsy:
MacMcCuskerCeramics

5. BEA PROUD, BEA GREAT

Whether Bea Arthur was the trailblazing Maude or the tell-it-like-it-is Dorothy, she was always on our side. Be proud with Bea.

\$16

Find it on Etsy:
PeachyApricot

6. BISEXUAL PRIDE FLAG COFFEE COZY

It may not be a mug, but it'll keep your coffee cozy. Show off your bi pride with this crocheted flag.

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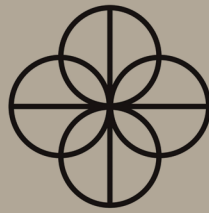
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HOLIDAY

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December 22 & 23

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At Christmas
December 15 & 16

2 Girls & A Boyd Got New
Shoes For Christmas
December 26 & 27

An Andy & Bing Christmas
December 28-31



952.934.1525 ChanhassenDT.com



HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Andy Lien]

My gift guides usually stray more toward the experiences than the actual gifts. Don't get me wrong, I love wrapping presents and I love opening presents, but experiences are something I particularly revel in, so that's what I'll stick to here.

1. MISS RICHFIELD 1981'S 17TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY SHOW:

Miss Richfield 1981 is running for governor in her all new show, *From the Trailer House to the State House - Santa Style!* For her 17th annual holiday show, Miss R will prove why she'll be Minnesota's best commander-in-chiffon, laying out her platform in side-splitting songs, very funny videos and getting the audience involved. You know, I've been involved in one of Miss R's shows and I can say that I had just as much fun on stage (in a pink poncho with a Hello Kitty clock and Miss Richfield yelling in my ear) as I did from my seat with the rest of the fine folks. It's a rollicking good time, not to mention my favorite sing-along of the year. She's a state treasure, why not make it official with a mansion too?

December 2-17

Illusion Theater

Starting at \$32

www.illusiontheater.org

2. JESSAMYN STANLEY'S EVERYBODY YOGA CLASS

"Queer fat femme yogi," Jessamyn Stanley, is someone I was following on Instagram for visual inspiration. When I found out I could actually follow her yogi ways in an online yoga package via Cody, I jumped at the chance. Everybody yoga is for larger-bodied people and it is a gentle and powerful reminder that yoga is for everybody. Movement is for everybody. Peace is for everybody. Buy this for yourself or someone else in your life.

\$39.99

www.codyapp.com

3. LOVE WARRIOR: A MEMOIR

You may not be up on the news, but confessional-mom-writer, Glennon Doyle Melton, is now dating Abby Wambach. Okay, anybody dating Abby Wambach is a big stinking deal, but particularly a writer who's been a major voice for women, mothers, Christians, addicts, and people with eating disorders. I would've recommended you read this memoir of Glennon's anyhow, but now that we know she's part of the ever-growing community, perhaps we'll all read her words with even more relatability than before, if that's even possible.

\$15.59

www.lovewarriorbook.com

4. BRUCE MUNRO: WINTER LIGHT AT THE ARBORETUM

Not only do I love nighttime light events (like Northern Spark each June), but being able to roam around a space usually only accessible in the daylight is a real treat. Bruce Munro is an internationally acclaimed artist and has created stunning installations around the globe. This exhibit at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska features six large-scale installations (five outdoor, one indoor) plus a series of immersive, sensory audio-visual animations. The exhibit runs through April 9 so I may go and see it a few times, depending on whether there's snow surrounding the installations or not. Each experience is bound to be different.

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

\$12-\$22

www.munrowinterlightmn.org

5. CHRISTMAS WITH CANTUS

I was fortunate enough to attend the history-making concert at Orchestra Hall featuring Cantus and Chanticleer this fall. What an epic night, celebrating the music and voices of men in all of the variety and diversity imaginable. But I swelled with hometown pride whenever Cantus was on stage. Their membership overlaps our community, their songs are inclusive, their concerts are lively. Be sure to see them this holiday season. With poignant and humorous readings set to beautiful underscoring, the annual *Christmas With Cantus* weaves a fresh concert out of the familiar and the new, as well as music from across centuries, including the beloved "Ave Maria" by Franz Biebl.

December 11-22

Various venues

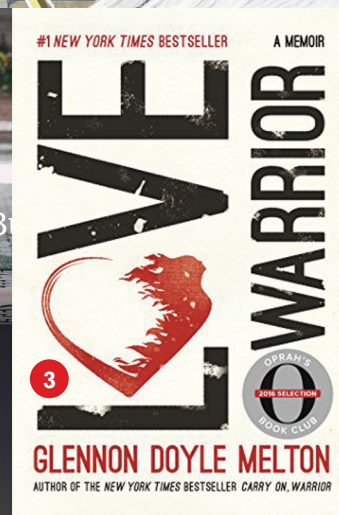
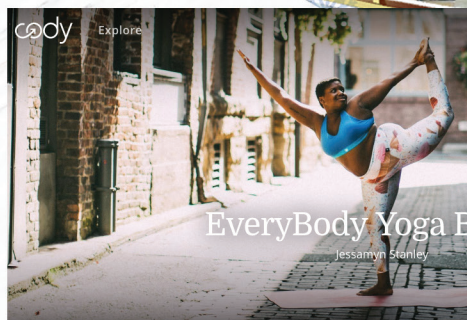
\$20-\$40 Adults / \$10 Students with valid ID

www.cantussings.com



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2



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Photo by Mark Picktall (c) Munro Studio



5

Photo by by Curtis Johnson



HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Andy Lien]

One of the things that takes me out of the holiday cheer and makes me remarkably bah-humbuggy is the lack of attractive mass-produced cards out there for the rainbow community. So, as usual, let's flock to the independent folks who do good work and are responsive to what we want and the need to express ourselves and our lives. Like these cards.

1. DECK THE HALLS WITH GAY REINDEER

Who doesn't love a gay reindeer with Norwegian sweater snowflake patterns in rainbow colors? Fa la la la la la la la. Clearly.

Panorama Press

\$5

www.thepanoramapress.com

2. SNOW MUCH

Here's one that lets you tell your moms or your dads that you love them "snow much" at Christmas time. Heartwarming, but hopefully not snow-melting.

Teazed

\$3.99

www.teazed.com

3. GINGERBREAD PEOPLE

Instead of the Village People, we've got the gingerbread people! Guys, gals, and leather...Corrie Kuipers has designed some cards to mail out to your friends and loved ones that represent you and your holidays.

\$1.39-\$3.50/card depending on quantity

www.greetingcarduniverse.com

4. SUPER HERO CHRISTMAS

Who's who in your relationship? Catwoman and Wonder Woman are under the mistletoe and making Christmas a little hotter.

\$3.30 available as digital download

Find on Etsy.com: ProyectoAlegria

5. DANCING ELVES

Whenever I picture Santa's elves, I see them as happy, dancing people. It never occurred to me that they might also be in love. This vintage card is adorable with a heavy dose of nostalgia.

\$3.75

Find on Etsy.com: inyourownwordslc

6. SKATE AWAY

You know what might be harder to find than same-sex holiday cards? Biracial same-sex holiday cards. So, finding this gem makes me as joyful as the women in the image. Find a river that you can skate away on, ladies.

\$3.99

Find on Etsy.com: Huggitos

7. MERRY CHRIZMAS OR HOLIDAYZ

Not everything same-sexy requires couples and love. So, whether you want to wish a merry Christmas or the more broad season of the holidays, Liza's got you covered. With a "Z." And a whole lot of attitude, just how we like it.

\$4.25

Find on Etsy.com: seasandpeas

8. NUTCRACKERS SWEET

I'm a sucker for subversion. Nutcrackers holding hands and making eyes at each other makes me very happy. Give them their space on the mantle, they've earned it.

\$5

Find on Etsy.com: gatamago





HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Ethan Boatner]

1. AMAZING WORLD OF DINOSAURS: AN ILLUSTRATED JOURNEY THROUGH THE MEZOZOIC ERA

Kuether's paleoart will excite and entrance every dinophile of all ages. The vast period of time covered ranges through the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous Periods, from 252 to 66 million years ago, and is captured in dozens of breathtaking color images. The creatures, plants, backgrounds, and atmospheres are as accurate as is known, together with Kuether's fertile imagination creating skin patterns, colors, and textures.

Written and Illustrated by James Kuether
Adventure Publications

\$14.95

2. CAKEWALK

In the little hamlet of Runnymede, a town literally divided by the Mason-Dixon Line, Brown offers more chronicles of the freethinking Hunsenmier sisters and the monied Chalfontes. The Great War has ended; the world is changing. Sex rears its lovely, confusing head, and Prohibition is gearing up. Family. Money. Sex. Add a splash of good scotch and it all makes for mighty fine reading.

Rita Mae Brown

Bantam

\$27

3. SET FREE

Famed author Jaspar Wills is kidnapped, beaten, and whisked away to somewhere in the area of Marrakech. Why? For how long? Months roll by. A young reporter travels to find the answers and is herself enmeshed. A wheels-within-wheels thriller, Bidulka must have chuckled inwardly as he posed for his characters and his readers hard questions on the nature of truth and freedom.

Anthony Bidulka

Bon Vivant Books

\$14.99

4. SPIRITS OF PEPIN: A NO ORDINARY WOMEN MYSTERY

Deese's latest outing of the No Ordinary Women book club ends abruptly when they discover a body aboard a runaway sailboat in Lake Pepin. Family turmoil and a local paranormal investigator confuse the trail, and Louise and Robin muddy the waters further by unknowingly destroying evidence. But murder most foul it is, and the five friends rush in fearlessly to prevent further deaths.

Barbara Deese

North Star Press

\$14.95

5. EDWIN H. LUNDIE: FIVE DECADES, A JOURNEY OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE

O'Toole's beautifully crafted volume does justice to the meticulous and glorious work of Minnesota architect Edwin H. Lundie (1886–1972) over the five decades of his practice. 350 color photographs and 450 Lundie sketches are enhanced by his own words that O'Toole has drawn from his archive in the University of Minnesota. A prize gift for Minnesota architecture and art aficionados.

Peter J. O'Toole

Artist Book Press

\$80

6. THE SOUL OF AN OCTOPUS: A SURPRISING EXPLORATION INTO THE WONDER OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Puppy dogs and kitties have personalities; octopuses are a harder sell. But Montgomery pulls it off, with amazing and sometimes eye-dampening tales of animals she has personally known and loved. "Consciousness" of the subtitle is the key word, as naturalist Montgomery introduces us to Athena, Octavia, Kali, and Karma of the New England Aquarium, and making mollusk sushi a more difficult choice.

Sy Montgomery

Atria Books

\$26

7. THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES: WHAT THEY FEEL, HOW THEY COMMUNICATE

Wohlleben spent over 20 years in the German forestry commission, and now manages a beech forest in Hummel, becoming an advocate for sylvan beings. In this amiable and evocative volume, he works with new scientific discoveries to present trees as social beings, able to warn, defend, tend their offspring, and support other members of their group. People are not the only game in town.

Peter Wohlleben

Greystone

\$24.95

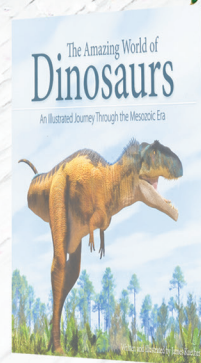
8. A KIND OF JUSTICE

In one fell swoop, James's protagonist, transwoman Bobbi Logan, becomes sole owner of L'Elegance salon, is beset by detective Wilkins who is hot to pin a five-year-old murder on her, takes in her newly widowed ex-wife and niece, and handles looming money problems. Worst of all, she can't quite remember all the details surrounding that murder. James — and Logan — handle it with dark aplomb.

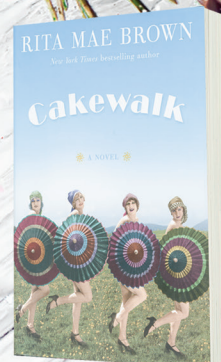
Renee James

Oceanview Publishing

\$26.95



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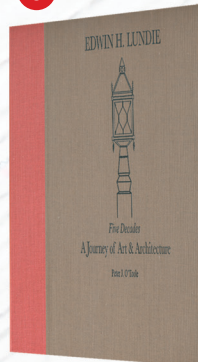
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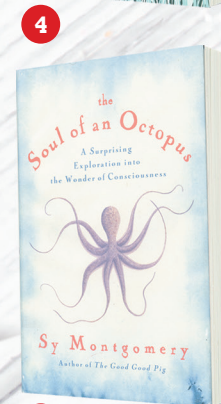
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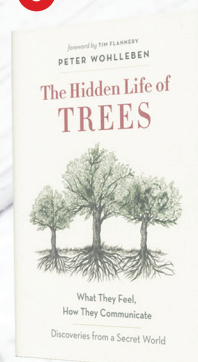
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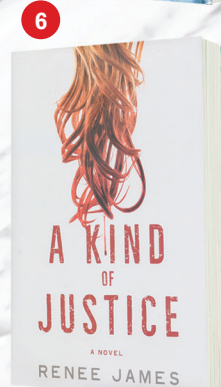
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8



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HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by John Mark]

1. MELTDOWN KIM TEE

Someday we will tell our grandchildren about this woman. Keep the obsessions alive for years to come with this indulgent moment in popular culture, immortalized on a T-shirt. You wish you didn't want this shirt, but unfortunately you do.

Hotrocity

\$24.99

www.hotrocity.com

2. BLUE FAUX FUR STOLE

People often ask me how they can keep their neck warm in the most decadent and indulgent of ways. Just kidding. No one has ever asked me that, but here's your answer. Zara's online store is a rabbit hole. Go get lost.

Zara

\$49.90

www.zara.com

3. CHI CHI DIGITAL PRINT

If you follow any of the RuPaul's Drag Race queens on social media, you've undoubtedly seen the artwork of Chad Sell, a Chicago-based illustrator, known for his homoerotic renditions of superheroes and drag queen celebrities. His work is fun and particularly popular among the Drag Race fandom.

Chad Sell Comics

\$10

www.chadsellcomics.com

4. NEON UNICORN

In life, people need food, water, shelter, and a glowing white neon unicorn for their desktop, shelf, ledge, or windowsill. It may sit just 14 inches tall, but this powerful little buddy lasts for up to eight years of continuous use.

Neon Mfg

\$119.99

www.neonmfg.com

5. KAWAII SNAPBACK

This hat by NYC-based streetwear brand, ADEEN, is obnoxiously cute. Pink embroidered roses and sparkles will help you appear more approachable, while the hat itself will cover your bad hair day and/or bald spot. Talk about functionality. See you in the club.

ADEEN

\$45

www.adeennyc.com

6. MOHAWK SALT & PEPPER SHAKERS

Jonathan Adler knows the way to my heart. The clean and sleek design makes these a great gift for a retired punker. You know, someone who has resigned from subversive actions and now has two kids.

Jonathan Adler

\$48

www.jonathanadler.com

7. DYRI LIGHT BLUE CANDLE

There are normal people and there are candle people. I transformed from a normal person into a candle person when I discovered this store online. Watching this reindeer melt into a skeletal nightmare is heartwarming.

Pyro Pet

\$35

www.pyropetcandles.com





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HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Shane Lueck]

My favorite part about holiday gift giving is the excuse to buy family and friends those things that they wouldn't normally buy themselves. They've talked nonstop about how much they want something but can't seem to justify spending their own money on it for one reason or another. For everyone on my list, it's because they constantly put everyone else before themselves. That's where the gift giver comes in. These gifts are things that I, or someone I know, would want, but wouldn't necessarily buy for themselves.

1. SHERLING CLOG BOOTS

These boots are at the very top of my list. Confession: I'm that guy who always puts fashion over function. I can't remember the last time I had a pair of winter boots; it's a wonder I haven't lost a toe yet. This Minnesota-based company provides warmth without sacrificing style. As someone who tends to blur the line, I'm in love with these winter boots that aren't overly feminine but also have some masculine touches. Sven will also custom create boots for those of us who want the "women's" designs in men's sizing: low-heeled winter boots can be made up to size 50, while mid-heel (2 3/4) boots go to size 43, which is US women's size 13.

Sven Clogs
\$370

www.svensclogs.com

2. MOVIESAC IN CHINCHILLA DENSE PHUR

At five feet wide and over three feet high, the MovieSac is the best (and most comfortable) seat in the house. It's perfect for reading, relaxing, and most of all, movie-watching. The fill is made of premium shredded Durafoam which, unlike bead-filled bags, absorbs body weight evenly and doesn't compress over time. My personal favorite fabrication is the uber-chic chinchilla phur, a unique blend of polyester that is both luxurious and durable at the same time. Because it's polyester-based, it's 100% machine washable and is built to breathe, so you get the softness you want without overheating like you may in a more dense fabric.

LoveSac
\$925

www.lovesac.com

3. QUILTED WAXWEAR TRAVEL DUFFLE

I love a good bag. But not just any bag. I want something unique that will stand out and ups the fashion game. Jack Spade never disappoints and this travel duffel is exactly what I'm going to be using to head north for the holidays. The quilted design harkens back to classic Chanel while the design and waxed treatment update the look for the modern man. Made of 100 percent waxed cotton with leather trim and twill lining, Jack Spade has built this bag to last. Its features include a removable shoulder strap and a zippered interior pocket for those toiletry necessities you need while you're away.

\$588

www.jackspade.com

4. INTERVENTION – A PARTY GAME FOR EVERYONE'S WORST HABITS

I'm always on the look out for a new game to play at the next gathering, and this one raises the stakes. This adult party game gives you and your friends a chance to anonymously reveal what you think about each other through taboo, hilarious, and all-around-ridiculous questions. Which of your friends is least likely to be wearing underwear right now? Who is the most awkward hugger? For better or for worse, the truth will be revealed. If you want a test-drive, download and print cards online before buying the real thing.

\$35

www.playintervention.com

5. TOP2BOTTOM: THE GAY PARTY GAME

Again, I love a good party game and this one brings the gay in full force. Essentially Cards Against Humanity with a gay twist, Top2Bottom is just as outrageous and dirty as you and your friends (meaning, adults only). One player draws a pink card and reads it aloud, and each remaining player chooses one white card to answer. To come out on top be the first player with six pink cards! For added fun, get one of the expansion packs (May I recommend the one targeted toward lesbians?).

\$26

www.top2bottomgames.com





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6. FAIRFIELD HOODIE

Great for transitional weather and perfect for any guy who wants a lightweight, very packable, warm staple hoodie for his wardrobe. This cool piece is easy to mix and match as well as layer. The jacket comes from Moose Knuckles, a cool-kid brand out of Canada, allowing him to keep warm and toasty while also being able to make an innuendo joke on the side.

Moose Knuckles

\$475

www.mooseknucklescanada.com

7. SHOE SUBSCRIPTION

King & Stone presents subscribers with a highly curated selection of on-trend designs to choose from, delivering four pairs of shoes per year (one per season) for a simple monthly subscription rate of \$25. When the new season drops, subscribers pick the style they want and their new shoes will be manufactured and shipped. Don't like that season's shoes? Feel free to skip a shipment or cancel at any time.

Annual subscription, \$280; Seasonal subscription, \$75

www.kingandstone.com

8. SOCK ADVENT CALENDAR

As a German, I love Advent calendars. As a stylish man, I love some good socks. Designed exclusively for Mr. Porter, treat someone special to a season of fresh socks with this clever advent calendar by Welsh knitwear specialist Corgi. From the first day to the 23rd, each drawer is stuffed with a cotton-blend pair in festive patterns, while Christmas Eve reveals a luxurious cashmere and silk-blend design.

Mr. Porter

\$475

www.mrporter.com

9. DUKE CANNON "BLOODY KNUCKLES"

HAND REPAIR BALM

I'm so tired of shaking someone's dry, cracked hand. It gives me the heeby jeebies. But I get it, not every guy wants a fruity or floral-scented lotion found in stores today. For those guys, this balm is just what the doctor ordered, made with Lanolin, so it won't leave your hands feeling greasy. Everything this company produces is made in the USA and a portion of sales go to The Honor Flight Network benefitting military veterans. Need I say more?

Blade + Blue

\$19

www.bladeandblue.com

10. EQUALITY TEE

This summer, *Lavender* published an article I wrote on sex trafficking and I haven't been able to forget about the prevalent issue ever since. In the article, I interviewed the founder of My Sister, an apparel company that works to prevent sex trafficking, educate communities, and empower the population. Designed to be a conversation starter, this Equality tee puts forth the message that equality between women and men is an essential step in eliminating sex trafficking. This classic crew neck tee makes a statement, and the super comfortable fabric makes it a lasting wardrobe favorite. Other designs include "Feminist," "Freedom," and so many others.

My Sister

\$30

www.mysister.org

11. THE DIVINE MISS M: DELUXE EDITION

Rhino Records revisits the early days of Bette Midler's incredible career with a deluxe version of her iconic 1972 debut album, *The Divine Miss M*. This two-disc set includes the remastered album, plus a bonus disc of singles, outtakes and demos, as well as new liner notes written by Midler. As a young gay, I'm slowly building up my collection of classics and this re-released deluxe edition is definitely on the list.

\$15

www.amazon.com



HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Shane Lueck]

Anyone who owns a pet knows that they are just as much a part of the family as any human; which means they get pampered and probably have one or two gifts under the tree as well. Don't let anyone convince you otherwise, furry friends need love too.

1. FRIENDSHIP COLLAR

A collar for your pet and a matching bracelet just for you, because best friends should match! Whether you have a feline friend or a canine chum, this combo symbolizes the powerful bond between you and your pet. Friendship Collar uses ethically sourced vegan leather in a variety of styles and designs to fit their values of comfort, style, and sustainability. And just in time for the holidays, Friendship Collar is releasing festive designs (like Candy Paws, shown here). Already have a Friendship Collar? Then maybe it's time to splurge for one of the charms for either the bracelet, collar, or both

\$25-\$70

www.friendshipcollar.com

2. EUROPEAN CHIC FURRY FRIENDS BUCKET

There is a slew of Furry Friends Buckets available, but for my little Shih Tzu mix, this European Chic style caught my eye. For the chic canine, this bucket holds the best of Harry Barker's European-inspired toys. A silver Good Dog bucket includes a small black gingham bone, large black Eiffel Tower, large pearl rubber column, yellow croquet ball, and citrus refreshing spray. Customization is available with up to 15 characters. What's better? The basic bucket is one of Oprah's favorite things this year, so use promo code "Oprah" to get the basic Furry Friends Bucket for \$48 if the European Chic isn't your style.

Harry Barker

\$74

www.harrybarker.com

3. KITTY BALL CAT BED

It can be hard to find cat furniture that complements your own decor, but Refined Feline solves that problem. This modern cat bed incorporates mid-century modern aesthetic while updating the trend for today's consumers. Let your cat lounge in style with this large, comfortable bed that's off the ground but easy to get into. Includes a soft, machine-washable cushion inside the 17-inch dome made of hand-woven, durable, nontoxic faux rattan that will not break if clawed. This is just one of the many stylish cat furniture options available.

The Refined Feline

\$100

www.thereefinedfeline.com

4. CAMBRIA PET FOOD CANISTER

As a pet owner, the bane of my existence is ugly storage containers that ruin my home decor. Pottery Barn to the rescue. Inspired by Pottery Barn's Cambria glazed stoneware collection, these canisters deliver good looks without sacrificing utility. A snug lid on this classic design keeps kibble fresh and secure. Made of stoneware with a glazed finish, this food canister comes with a 13-quart capacity, which is just perfect for my small dog's bag of food. There's even a matching treat container to complete the set!

Pottery Barn

\$129

www.potterybarn.com

5. NANTUCKET CAT COLLAR

It seems like everywhere you turn are accessories made for dogs, but Rover has an entire line made for felines and this black and white gingham cat collar is oh so sweet. Made of heavy-weight webbing and reinforced with double stitching, the movable and removable bow tie is secured with two elastic fabric bands. All Rover collars are handmade in their Toronto studio using the highest quality fabrics and close attention to detail. To sweeten the deal, Rover collars can be machine washed in cold water and hung to dry!

Rover The Pet Boutique

\$30

www.theroverboutique.com



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HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Randy Stern]

1. ROAD AMERICA SEASON PASS

Just five hours away is one of the best motorsport venues around. If you love the roar of engines running down the two straights and some of the most challenging corners around, then grab a 2017 season pass from Road America. It gets you into race weekends and excellent access to the venue. It does include camping, but there's plenty of accommodations in and around Elkhart Lake to relax after each race session. Whether you love IndyCar, NASCAR, MotoGP, Vintage Car Racing, and IMSA prototypes and sports cars, Road America has this covered all throughout 2017!

Road America

\$440.00

www.roadamerica.com

2. PORSCHE DRIVER'S SELECTION

Do you own a Porsche? Or, did you enjoy our reviews of Porsche's lineup so far? Or, just want to pose? Porsche owners might not be keen with posers, but the brand from Stuttgart has you covered from head to toe and beyond. You can select from a variety of T-shirts, caps, and accessories to a \$6,329 off-road bicycle. You can get bookends for your shelves made out of brake rotors. The idea is to extend the love for the Porsche brand throughout your life, whether you own one or love them from afar.

Porsche Cars North America

Prices vary on actual items

www.shop4.porsche.com/usa or visit Porsche of Minneapolis

3. CRASH COURSE: THE AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY'S ROAD FROM GLORY TO DISASTER

Pulitzer Prize-winner Paul Ingrassia takes you on a narrative with co-author Patrick Lawlor from a time when the American automotive industry was invincible to its lowest point during the global financial crisis. This book covers everything from the boardrooms of Detroit, Dearborn, and Auburn Hills to the halls of Congress and to small town car dealerships. It's one of the most illuminating books regarding the industry, for those interested in how the story really went down.

Random House

\$34.99

www.barnesandnoble.com

4. THE POLICE, SYNCHRONICITY

This is an answer to an old question about the kind of music I like to listen to when driving down the road somewhere. It is not the definitive answer, but I regard this as one of my favorite albums of my lifetime (another is Fleetwood Mac's Rumours). If you just listen to all of the tracks, they are great by themselves as a good road soundtrack. However, if you understood the conditions of making this album — the ego clashes leading to the group's breakup — then it makes for an interesting and sonic storytelling companion behind these songs from the early 1980s.

A&M Records/Universal Music Group

\$37.89

www.barnesandnoble.com or though Apple Music and Google Play Music

5. WAZE

It has become one of the fastest-growing apps for driving. While Google, Apple, and Yahoo Maps give you directions and some real-time traffic information, Waze goes beyond this. Traffic information is community-driven, meaning you can get updates quicker than a traffic report on the radio. You can communicate to those you are meeting by providing a real-time ETA to your destination. It also reads police traps, not that we encourage such behavior that would prompt getting citations from our friends in the public safety department. It is more integrated, so it takes a lot of the guesswork out of getting there safely.

Waze, Inc.

FREE

Apple App Store or Google Play Store

6. FANTASY DRIVES BY AUTO VAULT

In Issue 560, I talked about a driving experience that you can partake in with some of the greatest vehicles ever made. Imagine a short stint in a Lamborghini, McLaren, Audi R8, Bentley Continental GT, Porsche Cayman GT4...you get the idea. You can actually give these fantasy drives as a gift! You can do the two-hour experience, like I did, or go for the full-day experience. If you do the full-day experience, it is worth it. That means more time behind the wheel of a Lamborghini; who would not say "no" to that?

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HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Patrick Boland]

As an homage to my alma mater, St. Olaf College, I thought I would organize my six-item Christmas list into the categories of mind, body, and spirit. After all, what sounds more Happy Holidays than that! These are six items that made my 2016 one of the best years yet.

1. FOR THE MIND: HEADSPACE

Andy Puddicombe quit his university degree to travel the world for ten years, culminating with a stint in the circus and ordination as a Tibetan Buddhist monk in northern India. His work in meditation and mindfulness converged in Headspace, an app of guided meditations that range from 10-30 minutes. I downloaded the free trial a bit skeptically, but quickly became a fan. I'm a completionist, so the structured meditation topics ranging from Motivation to Creativity to Anxiety to Kindness are anything but trivial. One of my favorite exercises involves imagining yourself happy and in a state of kindness in a place that makes you happy. You imagine that image of yourself filling with a white, molten, joyful light. Then you imagine someone you care about in a place they love with the same joy, the same light. And finally you imagine that light emanating out from yourself as a source until it fills everyone around you in the room, the building, the city, the country, the world. It's a beautiful exercise, and there wasn't a day I did it that didn't feel lighter than the many months before.

Despite the price, it comes highly recommended.

Ranges from \$5.74 to \$14.95 a month

www.headspace.com

2. FOR THE MIND: ZINIO/AUDIBLE

Ok, I'm kind of cheating with two choices here, but I think both are valid based on the way you best process information. Audible has a variety of audiobooks for your perusal, something I've used frequently on long commutes. On the flip side, Zinio allows you to download magazines to read on the bus or light rail (and sometimes you can get these through partnership with your local library FOR FREE). I'm a big fan of Zinio, with subscriptions to *The Economist*, *The New Yorker*, *Forbes*, and *The New York Review of Books* (gives a wide berth of political perspectives). If you want to stay up to date in a fast moving world, these two are must-haves.

Zinio is a free app with paid subscriptions available

www.audible.com or www.zinio.com

3. FOR THE BODY: THE FIRM

Let's be honest, Christmas brokers in New Years, which means it's time to have New Years resolutions. Usually that involves working out more and skimming off that fat for your spring break trip to Puerto Vallarta. Or Florida. Or wherever else you do that. It's helpful to have a community to do that with. I used to be a Lifetime gym member, but The Firm has slowly been earning more and more of my loyalty. The sense of community is higher, the bro-factor is less intense, the population of gym goers is more diverse. It has a positive energy that I've found rarely duplicated anywhere else. Try a free trial week and see whether it's a good fit for you! You won't be sorry.

Individual classes or monthly plans with variable pricing

www.thefirmmpls.com

4. FOR THE BODY: DR. DENNIS GROSS ALPHA BETA UNIVERSAL DAILY PEEL

About a month ago, I was grabbing a coffee with one of my best friends, Chelsea, a brilliant, intense, and stunning healthcare consultant from NYC. She looked great. Rather than the sea of wrinkles and blackheads I expect in any over-caffeinated workaholic, her skin looked smooth, healthy, and young. I had been struggling with medical school's effect on my own complexion, so I asked what she used. She told me about these skin peels by Dr. Dennis Gross, a dermatologist who has been featured on Oprah. Rather than use them daily due to the price, she uses them twice per week and finds that sufficient. I've since adopted that twice a week regimen and lo and behold! I've been complimented on my skin twice and I can already see my blackheads receding. And I can still buy that Venti Americano without too much angst.

Sephora

35 treatments for \$88

www.sephora.com

5. FOR THE SPIRIT: CANON REBEL DSLR DIGITAL CAMERA

I thought this would best fit under the spirit category. Being able to travel the world is one thing, but being able to capture those memories of the places you see and the people you meet is invaluable. For a low-cost, high-quality digital camera, I think the Canon Rebel DSLR has long been a gold standard. Most of the pictures on my blog were taken with this camera. The only hang-up is that I often forget to bring it with me to take more pictures! While phones can do a lot, nothing can replace a good quality digital camera. Check this one out!

Starting at \$384

www.amazon.com

6. FOR THE SPIRIT: ST. OLAF CHRISTMAS FEST

Ok, I have to give a plug to my alma mater. If you've never been, St. Olaf's Christmas Fest may be one of the most beautiful celebrations of religion as an instrument of community in the modern world. Even the most secular of students at the university have found value in creating, participating, and watching the performance. A myriad of choirs, beautiful voices, sermons that unify rather than proselytize...St. Olaf Christmas Fest is one of those experiences you need to have to feel a complete lifetime. It was even listed as one of the top ten things to do in America by a popular travel magazine. Only problem is finding tickets — they come in high demand! Good luck.

\$30

www.stolaf.edu/christmasfest



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HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Shane Lueck]

There are so many reasons to purchase gender-neutral toys as gifts. Looking beyond the versatile hand-me-down aspect, children of any gender should be exposed to toys across the spectrum of make believe, learning, creativity, being able to grow up with the knowledge that they are as capable as anyone else. Additionally, sticking with gender-neutral gifts allows children to grow into their own identity, whatever that might be. Below are excellent gift ideas for the GLBT family in your life, from baby to teen.

1. MIRANO DIAPER BAG

PacaPod has classic diaper bags for men and women that can transition into a great family bag when the kids get older. The Mary Poppins of diaper bags, the Mirano diaper bag has a stylish mix of natural fabrics and soft leather, with fashionable buckle details to create a truly iconic silhouette. Tucked discreetly inside this cavernous bag (32-liter-plus capacity) are unique and detachable feeder and changing pods for storing baby feeding and changing items. No matter where you wander, everything is in place!

PacaPod
\$190

www.pacapod.com

2. A IS FOR ACTIVIST, BY INNOSANTO NAGARA

An ABC board book written and illustrated for the next generation: families who want their kids to grow up in a space that is unapologetic about activism, environmental justice, civil rights, GLBTQ rights, and everything else that activists believe in and fight for. The alliteration, rhyming, and vibrant illustrations make the book exciting for children, while the issues it brings up resonate with their parents' values of community, equality, and justice.

\$10

Available at Barnes & Noble

3. DISCOVERY BOX

Every month, a new learning theme will arrive on your doorstep with all the earth-friendly materials needed to complete projects appropriate to the theme. Themed boxes explore topics like ocean science, space, safari, music and more with supplies for between five and eight science, technology, engineering, art and math kits for ages three to ten.

Gift boxes start at \$25

www.greenkidcrafts.com

4. LITTLE LIVE PETS SNUGGLES MY DREAM PUPPY

Have a young one asking for a puppy? This must-have toy fulfills that requirement without the allergens, mess, or additional apartment security deposit. Made for kids ages 5 and up, this tiny pup is the most realistic toy pet hitting store shelves this holiday season. Needless to say, Snuggles is best described as the Beyoncé of the Little Live Pets line, with six play modes and more than 35 puppy sounds (such as sniffing and barking). Snuggles moves, feels, and responds just like a real puppy does; with a pat of the head or a rub of the tummy, Snuggles behaves in different

ways. Realistic and fully interactive, all Snuggles needs is a best friend.

Moose Toys
\$55

Available at major retailers

5. DC SUPER HERO GIRLS COLLECTION

There's been a lot of talk this year about super heroes sending the right message to our girls, and these dolls continue that message. Not only do they have a very fun look, they also send a great message of empowerment. The dolls feature articulating limbs so kids (both girls and boys!) can use them for acting out all sorts of super hero moves. You can buy the larger 12-inch dolls individually or go in for the 6-inch versions in a three or six pack.

Starting at \$12

Available at Target.com

6. XXL GIANT COLORING ROLL

Discover the endless possibilities of these giant coloring rolls! On the floor, on the wall or as a tablecloth, these giant posters can be drawn alone or with friends. Hours of fun guaranteed. Available in several designs, from a world map to the most funny themes, try to complete them all! Designed and made in France by OMY Design & Play.

\$30

www.ameico.com

7. YOGA JOES

They're funny and a little weird, and they're only \$25. No need to overthink it. Poses range from a headstand to tree pose, downward-facing dog, and more. Figures vary from one to three inches high, made from ABS plastic, and come in zen yoga studio packaging with a bamboo floor.

Brogamats
\$25

www.brogamats.com

8. GAME OF PHONES

A great gift for teens who can't look up from their smartphones for more than two minutes at a time, and parents who don't want to be left out of the fun. The only requirement to play this game is the Game of Phones deck of cards and a smartphone. Take on challenges such as finding the best selfies, taking photos of other players, and showing your worst or funniest texts.

Breaking Games
\$20

www.breakinggames.com

9. BOARDLESS SKATEBOARD

It's sort of like the hoverboard, which was so hot last year, only there is no engine, so there is no risk of it blowing up or crashing you into a wall. Simply place your feet inside the two rolling units and skate away with a natural "wave" motion. There are no batteries or motors to charge: large radius wheels rotate sideways around your feet for a smooth and stable ride over pavement or short grass.

Sharper Image
\$100

www.sharperimage.com





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COCKTAIL CO.

BATCH N° 000002

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Handcrafted in the South

8 fl oz
237 ml

ELDERFLOWER TONIC

JACK RUDY
COCKTAIL CO.

BATCH N° 000001

EXTRA BITTER TONIC
Handcrafted in the South

8 fl oz
237 ml

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HOLIDAY *Gift Guide*

[by Shane Lueck]

These products are perfect for all fitness enthusiasts, from hard-core gym rats to amateur athletes. From stocking stuffers to apparel and more, this list has something for every price point and every fitness level. Gear up or get inspired, and get ready to accomplish those fitness goals in the new year. Circle the gear that catches your eye, or find a great gift for the special workout buddy on your list.

1. UMORO SHAKER BOTTLE

Consume your protein powder or supplements with the push of a button. This shaker bottle has a lid that houses a heaping scoop of your powder. It's held in place by a mixer ball until you're ready to consume your mixture. Once you are, just press the button on top and it's ready to enjoy.

\$27

www.umoro.com

2. QUANTUM LONG SLEEVE ZIP HOODIE

Here's your hoodie for the next 6 months. The merino fabric keeps you mega comfortable during any outdoor winter activity, but is lightweight enough to wear in the gym, too. Best of all, it resists odor naturally, so you can sweat in style without suffering the consequences.

Icebreaker

\$225

www.icebreaker.com

3. BIOCERAMIC COMPRESSION V2 TECH PANTS

Virus makes some of the sleekest, comfiest compression pants money can buy. Designed for high-endurance athletes, these tights wick away moisture, and claim to help improve circulation and reduce inflammation during a workout. The Bioceramic fabric has been engineered to provide natural compounds that emit infra-red therapy directly from the fabric.

Virus

\$69

www.virusintl.com

4. ICON XL CONVERTIBLE BACKPACK

It's the Swiss-army knife of gym bags. This convertible backpack-meets-duffel bag has a pocket for just about everything: wet gym clothes, shoes, a laptop, and a temperature-controlled spot for post-workout snacks. It's constructed out of heavy-duty nylon so it won't rip or tear, even when hauling equipment for an outdoor sweat session.

Hylete

\$200

www.hylete.com

5. FLIPBELT CLASSIC

The perfect alternative to bulky running armbands and running pouches for both men and women, this fitness belt is lightweight, machine-washable Lycra spandex that comfortably grips skin to hold position and prevent chafing. The stretchy, flat pocket design lets you easily slide in everything you might need while exercising: your phone (including large phones like the iPhone 6 and Nexus 5), keys, ID, cards, cash, medical devices and more. Better yet, these items stay securely in place without uncomfortable bouncing.

\$29

www.flipbelt.com

6. CLASSPASS

A monthly subscription service providing access to the world's largest network of boutique fitness studios and gyms, allowing you access to tens of thousands of classes available at over 8,500 studios in 39 cities worldwide. It's designed to help you explore tons of amazing studios and classes, challenge yourself with different ways to work out, and get you into the kind of fitness you feel passionate about. No contracts and a variety of plans to choose from means you can hold, change up, or cancel your membership at any time.

\$55-\$89/month

www.classpass.com

7. FITSPIRATION JOURNAL

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Fitlosophy

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www.getfitbook.com



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HOLIDAY
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www.amcraftspirits.com

My Mother Mary

The GLBT and PFLAG communities recently lost a trailblazing author, activist, and advocate. My mother, Mary Virginia Borhek, age 94, of Pennswood Village in Newtown, Pennsylvania, departed this life on Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2016.

I have known for some time that I would eventually be writing a column about my mother's legacy to this community. But that doesn't make it any easier now that the time to write the column is here.

In 1975 my mother discovered that I was gay; she found out before I had a chance to tell her. At that time she was a member of an independent Christian charismatic church and, in accordance with the beliefs of her congregation, felt strongly that homosexuality was a sin. She prayed, she fasted, and she and fellow church members held at least one exorcism in absentia in her living room to cast the gay demon out of me. She also began tape recording her thoughts on what was happening, believing that she eventually would write a book about how one gay man, her son, had been "prayed straight."

But she later wrote: "As I watched him living his life, I was the one who began to change my ideas." The book became instead the story of how she learned to accept her gay son without wanting to change him. In 1979 the book was published as *My Son Eric*. Because my mother could not predict how the book would be received, she changed everyone's name in the book except her own (I chose "Eric" as my nom de book). *My Son Eric* was reprinted in 2002 in a revised and expanded edition. A picture of your humble columnist, eight years old and in his Cub Scout uniform, was on the cover of the revised version of the book.

My mother's second book, *Coming Out to Parents: A Two-way Survival Guide for Lesbians*



and *Gay Men and Their Parents*, was published in 1983 and was revised and updated in 1993. The revised edition added a chapter (beautifully written, in my opinion) for gay men, lesbians, and their families dealing with AIDS.

These two books have become part of the GLBT and PFLAG literary canon. I have lost count of the number of people who, when they find out that I am the "Eric" in *My Son Eric*, have said to me either "Your mother's book was one of the first ones I read when I was coming out" or "I gave your mother's book to my parents when I came out."

In 1978 and 1979 my mother was active in Families of Gays and Lesbians (one of the forerunners of present-day PFLAG — Parents and

Friends of Lesbians and Gays) in the Twin Cities and served as editor of its monthly newsletter. In 1982 and 1983 she was a member of the advisory committee of Wingspan, a ministry with and on behalf of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons and their families sponsored by St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church. Over the years she spoke to close to 200 gay and lesbian organizations, PFLAG chapters, and church groups at many places throughout the United States. She also presented workshops and was interviewed on radio and television.

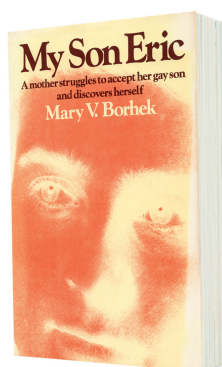
In 1986 she was invited to present a paper, "Helping Gay and Lesbian Youth Deal with Their Families" at the Symposium on Gay and Lesbian Adolescents sponsored by the University of Minnesota Institute of Continuing Education in Adolescent Health Care. The following year this paper was published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health Care*.

In 1993, after moving to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where she was born, my mother founded Sanctuary, a group within the Moravian Church for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered persons.

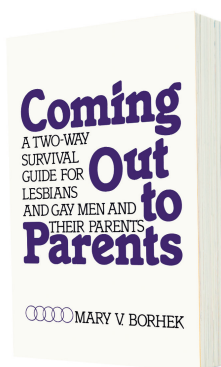
Lavender published an article about my mother in 1999, and I have mentioned her several times in this column as well. Coming out to her about my leather activities was much easier than coming out to her as gay. She read my column and frequently commented to me about it.

In 2011 my mother discovered a file folder of poems she had written between 1975 and 1990. These poems became her final book, *I Must Go to the Well*. Although physically frail, her mind remained sharp and creative until the end.

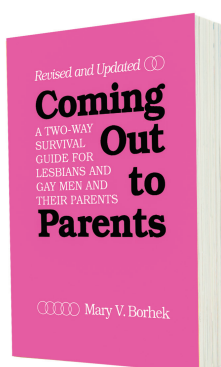
I love you, Mom, and I always will. Thanks for everything. ■



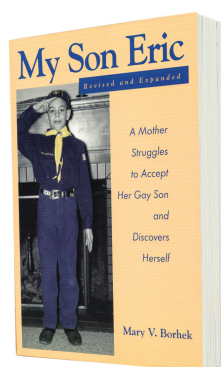
1979 First edition



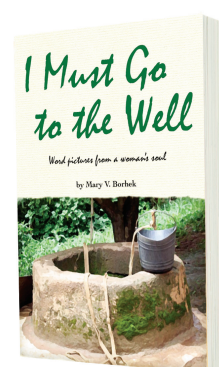
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1993 Second edition



2002 Second edition



2011



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AT LARGE | BY JOHN MARK

Five Dates for Cold Days

I love going on dates that end with a walk around the lake or a walk through the park, but it's soon to be an arctic tundra outside. (Why do we still live here?) Here's a short list of date ideas for when it gets cold that hopefully end with you and your date staying warm.

5. Northeast — The Riddle Room and Chimborazo

Did you ever see that movie *Saw*? This is nothing like that. At The Riddle Room, you get an hour to solve different puzzles and riddles, a perfect opportunity to show your great problem-solving abilities. Unfortunately, your team must consist of 6 or more people. Sorry, this one will have to be a group outing. That's fine. It's a good way to ask someone on a date without asking them on a date. It's challenging, but not too challenging. It can be stressful (but that's OK); you're supposed to do stressful things with a potential mate because once you survive the stressful situation, the mind says, "This person helped me through a stressful situation, they must be good. Stick with them." You want this to happen to your date's subconscious mind. Trick them into liking you. By the way, this reason is also why you're supposed to go to scary movies with a date. Then head over to Chimborazo, a cute Ecuadorian restaurant. The food is hot, which contrasts the weather well. Close your eyes. You're in Ecuador... and warm... and rich... and a supermodel.

4. St. Paul — joan's in the Park and The Town House

joan's in the Park is a classy, white tablecloth restaurant that serves great food, located in the Highland Park area. Serving shrimp, clam, and crab, seafood will be your friend here. After that, swing by The Town House, St. Paul's notorious gay bar. You want to go here on Thursdays; free darts, free pool, \$2 rail drinks, and \$2 domestics. Keep it classy with joan's in the Park, then get rowdy at The Town House. Show your date that they got them someone "who can do both."

3. Downtown — The Depot

What better way to break the ice than with... (ugh) ice skating? The best way to determine if your date will be a good mate is if they can skate. I think this is actually ancient Viking lore and it's yet to fail me. Anyway, when you're done repeatedly falling down on a cold, hard surface, hit up The Depot Tavern and get the Depot Burger. Great burgers. Outside of Juicy Lucy, they might actually have the best burgers in the Twin Cities.

2. Hopkins — LTD Brewery, Pub 819, and Hopkins Theater

Dinner and a movie; it's how you say, "Do you want to have sex with me?" without saying it. Start this date off with the Hopkins movie theater. It's a cute and old-timey theater with bright lights out front. Not to mention, it's cheap: \$3 movies, \$2.50 if you go before 6:00 p.m. And I'm no expert, but I was told you're actually supposed to go to the movie first so you have something to talk about during dinner. Which takes us to dinner at Pub 819, a spot known for its whiskey and local craft beer. And if the beer there isn't local enough for you, then walk a block down the street to LTD Brewing Co. for as local as it gets.

1. Calhoun — Sushi and Minneapolis Institute of Art

Marilyn Monroe once said, "Cultured people are so hot" and with this, you're going to let your date know you're really effing cultured. The first stop is the Minneapolis Institute of Art. They have some new Japanese and Korean collections that are simply stunning. A lot of the pieces are from the 13th–18th century, including a suit of Samurai armor. It's actually pretty amazing seeing something like this in real life. You don't need to be a fine art major to appreciate what they have. Then head out to Wakame Sushi and Asian Bistro for (surprise) sushi. Hit up the sushi bar and make sure to get the Minnesota roll or the Russian roll. ■

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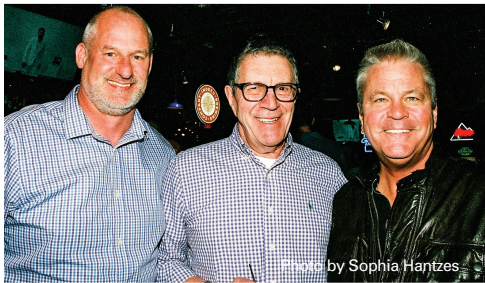
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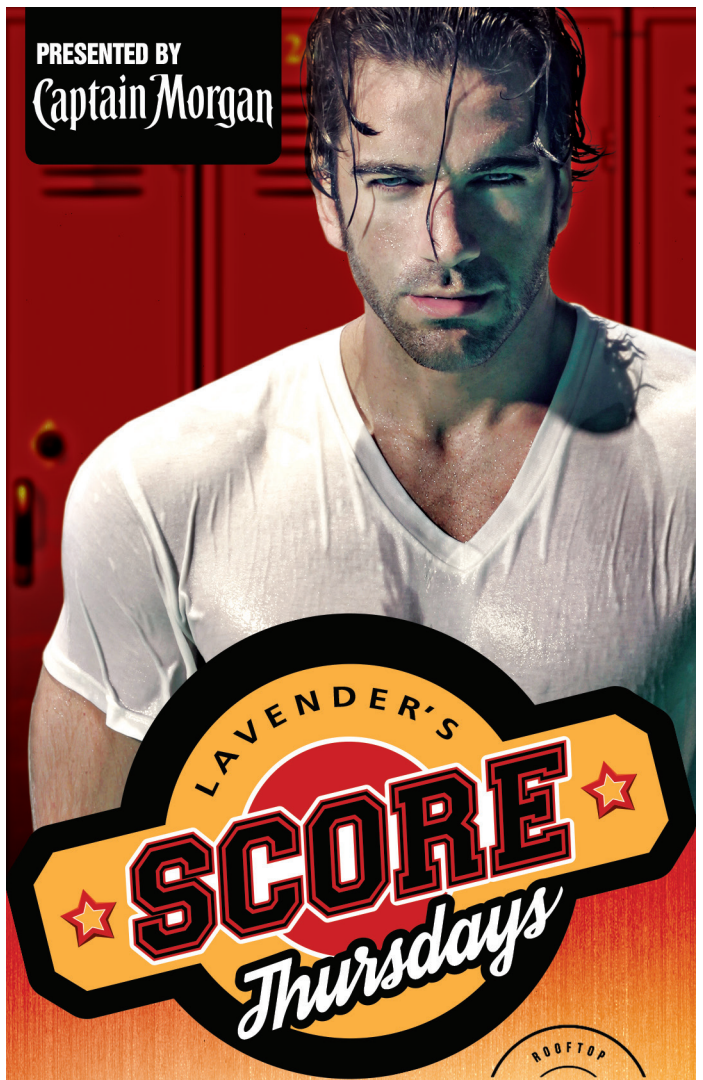
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